

EATON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

January 13, 2025

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were Paul Nuccio, Tom Head, Dick Fortin, Robin Nuccio, Holly Fortin and Marnie Cobbs. Also present were Dagmar von Schwerin and Emily Lucy.

2. **ADMINISTRATION** – Minutes of the December 9 meeting were accepted.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Land Conservation Fund	\$19,318.39	CD \$10,577.29	
Forest Management Fund	\$18,421.08	CD \$31,731.87	
Foss Mountain Fund	\$13,309.45		
Conservation Fund	\$15,064.31	CD \$10,577.29	
TOTALS	\$118,999.31	CD \$52,886.45	\$171,885.76
Donation boxes	\$14.00 + \$15.00		
Website Donation Income	\$0.00		

Received check for \$2,350 for Land Use Conversion Tax (Hastings) – deposit to Land Conservation Fund

Voted to pay Dan Stepanauskas bill of \$838 for McBrien / Creative Concept boundary line work out of Forest Management

Voted to pay UNH water monitoring invoice of \$456 for water sampling on Crystal, Thurston and Long Pond simmer of 2024 out of Conservation Fund

Discussed Henney Fund with bank – specific language must be followed. Robin will develop a modified educational grant application for review by the Bank Board if we want to use it for Tin Mountain Education Grant – otherwise ECC will use fund only for trail work etc., not education.

Treasurer's report was accepted.

4. **SELECTMEN'S REPORT** – Discussed trees on Potter Road that had been marked to be cut. Eversource is aware of Potter Road's Scenic Road designation and plans to go before the Planning Board for review.

5. **PLANNING BOARD** – Focused on results of MP questionnaire. Trends highly valued Eaton's quiet rural character and expressed concern over increased traffic on route 153. Respondents value the Ridgeline Protection Ordinance and limits on short term rentals. They also indicated strong support for the development of wetland, shoreline protection, and noise protection ordinances. PB will edit the Quality of Life chapter and work on a Wetlands Ordinance to prepare for a vote in 2026. They will also address shortcomings in the short-term rental ordinance this Spring.

6. FOSS MANAGEMENT – Emily Lucy presented a proposal for picking blueberries on Foss. Emily grew up in Brownfield and knows Foss well. Along with her role as a landscaper, educator and youth development volunteer, she will be farming lavender in the area and feels that adding Foss' blueberry crops, particularly based on her experience growing blueberries in Alaska, could be beneficial to her farming plans and to the town of Eaton.

7. TOWN LAND MANAGEMENT – Discussed potential for William Heath to take Green SnowPro Snowfighter Seminars, which are being recommended by NH DES for all town DPW employees. These courses are part of an initiative by NH DES to educate DPW employees about road salt use and how to use best management practices. Cost is \$60 for DPW employees, however classes do not start until September. The ECC has been added to a list for notification of when registration for classes becomes available. There is a separate \$415 Smart About Salt Council (SASC) course regarding road salting and best management practices that takes place sooner, however it is not part of Green SnowPro courses. Dick will talk to William Heath to see if he would be interested.

Development of the ECC Conservation Plan will be the ECC's work for winter months. Dennis & Marnie are providing previous work and resources. Paul and Dagmar will work on a draft.

8. FOREST MANAGEMENT – Dan Stepanauskas explained that only licensed Surveyors can establish new blazes – Dan can paint, not blaze. ECC will clarify individual instances. ECC will contact owners along unknown or unclear lines to see what info or surveys they might have and prioritize possible surveying to clarify boundaries.

9. WATER MANAGEMENT – Paul received water quality results and talked with GMCG and Bob Craycraft. Compared to previous data collected from 1996-2002, Crystal Lake, Long Pond, and Thurston Pond all have shown increased conductivity, with Thurston Pond having the highest levels of the three ponds. This is expected due to road salt and weather runoff. So far, levels are not high enough to be of concern. There may be fluctuations from year to year. We will continue to gather data and monitor conductivity levels.

Thurston Pond is now Mesotrophic, meaning it does not meet the standards of what is considered a healthy body of water. This does not mean it is unsafe. However, it will be crucial to address this as Thurston Pond lies over a stratified aquifer that wells tap into. It is also important to keep the pond healthy for its ecosystem, wildlife, local property owners, scenic quality, and it being part of a chain of lakes and ponds that are a large part of the Ossipee Lake Watershed. ECC may be able to make Thurston Pond an educational opportunity for the community if we can encourage people along all lakes, ponds and streams as well as those that are part of the local watershed to use best management practices. This will hopefully restore the health of Thurston Pond and maintain the health of other waterbodies. If nothing is done, Thurston Pond could undergo eutrophication in the future, which would result in harmful algal blooms, decreased biodiversity, reduced water clarity, and an unsightly appearance.

10. OTHER BUSINESS –

ECC was asked by the PB to submit our analysis and recommendations on Recreation and Wetlands Protection questionnaire responses.

Recreation: Based on Yes / No responses and comments, respondents were split roughly 50:50 based on keeping / improving what we have versus developing new recreational infrastructure. ECC is opposed to the development of new recreation due to costs to the town, volunteer

manpower needed and the impact of new trails on unfragmented land, wildlife corridors and water quality – issues many respondents would not be aware of when submitting their opinions. “We [the ECC] are in the conservation not entertainment business.” sic

Wetlands Protection: Majority of people want an ordinance for Wetlands protection. Many are not aware that local ordinances would be needed to specifically protect water quality in Eaton despite overarching Federal and State regulations. ECC is in favor of developing stronger wetlands protections for lakes, ponds and all waterways in Eaton.

Linda Jenkins asked to be added to the Notification list for Foss volunteers. Marnie has the list and will send it to Robin.

There is a GMCG CC zoom meeting for local Conservation Commissions from 1-3 pm on January 17. Paul will attend

Taking Action for Wildlife webinar series – Dagmar will attend four Zoom meetings.

Dick contacted Eaton’s insurance company – they will not cover prescribed, training burns on Foss. We will need a contract with State of NH, or the NH Fire Council has to provide insurance coverage, otherwise Selectmen will not support the burns. Dick and Paul will talk to Chris, Prescribed Fire Coordinator for the Forest Protection Bureau, again.

Nick Cusio – USDA Beaver deceivers won’t work here in Eaton as you need at least a 6 foot difference in elevation between one side of the dam to the other side of the dam. Deceivers do not work on 2 foot tall beaver dams, which is what Eaton has.

Notification for Foss volunteers.

Next meeting: February 10, 2025 at 6 pm

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm

Respectfully submitted by Dagmar von Schwerin, Recording Secretary